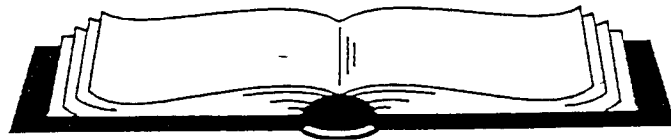# NEW JERSEY

1999-2000
Guidelines and
Application

BEST

ORIGINAL

PRACTICES

Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 22, 1999

Category	Special Education _____ (Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	We Love Pets
Number of Schools with Practice	1 (If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	Burlington
District (Proper Name)	Lumberton Township School District
District Address	30 Dimsdale Drive, PO Box 8
	street/p. o. box
	Lumberton, New Jersey 08048
	city zip code
District Telephone	(609) 267-1406 Fax(609)267-0002 Email lumberton.k12.nj.us
Chief School Administrator	Frank J. Logandro
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	Florence L. Walther School
School Address	56 Chestnut Street, PO Box 8
	street/p. o. box
	Lumberton, New Jersey 08048
	city zip code
School Telephone	(609)267-1404 Fax(609)267-1124 Email baij@lumberton.k12.nj.us
School Principal	John H. Baily
Program Developer(s)	Mrs. Arey, Mrs. Knazek, Mrs. Oneid, Mrs. Grovatt
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	*Frank J. Logandro*

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ✓ Yes ___ No   County Superintendent's Signature *Diane DiGuiseppe*

11.30.99

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Regina Arey, Susan Knazek, Mitchell, Michele Oneid, Cynthia Grovatt

Application Requirements:

♦ RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS. No reference should be made to the names of the district or the school(s). Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements.

♦ USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable) and 4 and THE NUMBER OF LINES SPECIFIED FOR RESPONSES to the statements. Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.

♦ Application must be keyboarded on 8 ½" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Ten-point or larger computer font or twelve-pitch or larger typewriter font must be used. (This sentence is in ten-point.)

♦ KEYBOARDED RESPONSES to the statements below must be no more than a total of three pages. Keyboard the statement followed by the response. Format your response to the number of lines specified.

♦ The information on page 4 and the keyboarded responses to statements must be printed or copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be printed or copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) and 4 and the keyboarded responses together.

♦ The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.

♦ The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 22, 1999, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

♦ FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION MAY RESULT IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE APPLICATION.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:

Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name __We Love Pets__
X Elementary School	Pre-K, K	
___ Middle School		
___ Junior High School		Number of Schools with Practice ___1___
___ High School		Number of Districts with Practice _____
___ Other: _____		

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.

___ Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	___ Educational Technology	___ Safe Learning Environment
___ Assessment/Evaluation	___ Health and Physical Education	___ School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
___ Bilingual Education and Diversity	___ Language Arts Literacy	___ Science
___ Citizenship/Character Education	___ Mathematics	___ Social Studies
___ Early Childhood Education Programs	___ Professional Development	X Special Education
___ Educational Support/Guidance	___ Public Engagement	___ World Languages
and Counseling Programs	(family involvement and partnerships	
(services contributing to	with business, community and/or	
high student achievement)	higher education)	

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1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated. (Maximum of 50 lines for response)

2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s). (Maximum of 50 lines for response)

3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. (Maximum of 60 lines for response)

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*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at http://www.state.nj.us/education.

WE LOVE PETS

We Love Pets is an introduction to science for kindergarten and preschool special education students. We chose "pets" over zoo animals because of their familiarity and accessibility. We begin in January by taking a survey of our classes and creating a graph showing what kinds of pets the students and teachers involved have. We pool our resources to have as many living examples as possible for any given lesson. We learn to classify animals by pets with fur, pets with feathers, and pets with scales. We use Internet "pet cams" to select a pet and check up on it weekly in the library, recording activity in a journal. We incorporate literature concentrating on the use of descriptive and definitive words of locomotion: swims, flies, hops, slithers, creeps, waddles, etc. A local animal shelter will be visiting our school for a private *show and tell* with our students. This allows our tactile defensive children a non-threatening opportunity to explore fur, feathers, and scales. The culminating activity is held on National Pet Day in June, with a pet show in the library hosted by our classes. Students throughout the school submit writing intensive posters or dioramas of their pets. We invite them to bring in their pet and parents. Our students collect tickets and host tours of the animals, which of course, are arranged by characteristics.

This experiential science program motivates preschool and kindergarten special needs students to improve language skills, fine motor skills, technology abilities and social emotional skills. *We Love Pets* participants achieve the following objectives:

1. Students are exposed to common pets in a variety of habitats.

2. Students use critical thinking and organizational skills to create pet journals.

3. Student use technology tools to practice expressive language and computer keyboarding skills.

4. Students enhance mathematical skills through surveys and graphing activities.

5. Students' fine motor skills are strengthened as they illustrate their pet through a variety of art mediums.

6. Students' social and emotional skills are enhanced as they "host" a school wide Pet show.

Children with special needs require extra motivation to excel and remain persistent at overcoming difficult developmental challenges. This project provides the students with hands on opportunities to investigate animals and learn to categorize and classify types of pets. The special needs children that participate in this project were evaluated and classified as having specific learning disabilities related to language and neurological delays. Individual Educational Plans were developed for each child. These IEP's list

language, fine motor, thinking, and social communication skills to be developed. This "We love Pets" program combines IEP goals and objectives for each child with the New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content and Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards.

The students are provided a format to practice skills that are challenging while enriching self-esteem and providing extra motivation. The finished Pet Graphs and Pet Stories about types of animals provide this extra motivation and increased self-esteem. Beyond the basic skills practiced, a variety of learning modalities are used, problem solving skills are taught, technical skills enhanced, and self worth of each child is boosted as the students host a Pet Show. This project is an excellent tool to meet a large number of Core Curriculum Standards and prepare students for workplace readiness.

Standards and Practices Addressed in the "We Love Pets" project

1. *Cross – Content Workplace Readiness Standards*
    A. Standard 1 – Students develop planning skills as they organize and host the school wide pet show.
    B. Standard 2 – Students learn computer keyboard skills to type sentences about their pets, and Internet skills to check on their Internet pet.
    C. Standard 3 – Students use critical thinking skills to create animal graphs and classify animals.
    D. Standard 4 – Students develop self-management skills as they plan and carry out various tasks involved in hosting the school pet show.
2. *Core Curriculum Content Standards*
    A. Standard 1.2 – Students refine perceptual, intellectual, and technical skills in the process of illustrating animal graphs and animal classification stories.
    B. Standard 1.3 – The finished products such as animal graphs, pet classification stories, and pet journals are all an artistic product completed cooperatively by the special needs classes.
    C. Standard 1.6 – Design skills are developed as students plan the form and placement of pictures, letters, and sentences in each animal classification story and graph.
    D. Standard 3:1 - Speaking skills are refined as students read their classification stories to various audiences during culminating Pet Show activities.
    E. Standard 3:2 Pet graphs and animal language experience, classification stories provide a variety of formats to practice and perfect listening skills.
    F. Standard 4:2 – Animal graphing activities provide students an opportunity to communicate mathematically through written, oral, symbolic, and visual forms of expression.
    G. Standard 4:1 – Students develop the abilities to solve mathematical problems using the pet survey and graphing experiences.

H. Standard 5:2 – Students formulate questions about animals, make systematic observations and interpret and analyze data from pet classification/observations, and from pet cam journals.

Learning about science is practical and fun with the use of this "Best Practice" *We Love Pets* project. It provides extra motivation for young children who are developmentally challenged. This project provides preschool and kindergarten age special needs students with hands on opportunities to learn about and classify pets. Students' progress and improvement is documented by increased proficiency in verbal and written language skills as they create journals complete with illustrations. The project and culminating pet show use the following assessment measures to determine the extent to which the objectives of this project have been met:

Objective #1- Students' language comprehension and verbal expression skills show improvement following exposure to a variety of common pets. Standardized tests and teacher observation will document improvement.

Objective #2 - Students' thinking and organizational skills are enhanced through their completion of classification, stories and journals. The completed stories and journals about pets and their habitats document growth of these skills.

Objective #3- Students' language and technology skills are advanced as they observe a pet on the Internet and then complete art and journal activities. A display of their completed projects and informal teacher observation document improvement.

Objective #4- Mathematical skills are advanced by a pet survey, then making and interpreting the results on a graph .Completion of the graph, group discussion of the results, and teacher observation evaluate progress.

Objective #5- Fine motor skills show improvement as each student illustrates pets. Informal teacher observation and an increase in children's willingness to explore new mediums and textures document growth.

Objective #6- Through sharing their pets and hosting a school pet show, students learn to cooperate and take turns. Their motivation and self-esteem is improved as they guide other students through the show. They demonstrate growth by showing their affection for their pets and concern for their care.

We Love Pets is a "Best Practice" that was designed to introduce young special needs students to the world of science through the familiar and accessible medium of pets. Students experience pride and increased motivation as they display their completed projects and guide students through their show. While this is a "Best Practice" which can and should be replicated for all primary age children, it is especially effective with the young special needs population.